

## **December 2016 Alive & Well Update: Farmer Depression**

### **Stress, Depression, and Occupational Injury among Migrant Farmworkers in Nebraska**

Agriculture is one of the most dangerous industries in the United States. Farmworkers, including migrant farmworkers, are at risk for work-related injuries. This study explores the association between stress, depression, and occupational injury among migrant farmworkers in Nebraska. Occupational injury was hypothesized to significantly increase the odds of farmworkers being stressed and depressed. Two hundred migrant farmworkers (mean age = 33.5 years, standard deviation (SD) = 12.53; 93.0% men, 92.9% of Mexican descent) were interviewed. In bivariate analyses, results indicated that stress and depression were positively associated with occupational injury. Two logistic regression models were developed. Occupational injury was a significant factor for depression, but not for stress. Participants who had been injured on the job were over seven times more likely to be depressed. These results highlight the interconnection between the work environment and mental health. More must be done to foster well-being in rural, agricultural communities. Improving occupational health and safety information and training, integrating behavioral health services into primary care settings, and strengthening the protections of the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act may improve conditions for migrant farmworkers in the rural Midwest.

### **Enhanced Co-Worker Social Support in Isolated Work Groups and Its Mitigating Role on the Work-Family Conflict-Depression Loss Spiral**

This paper examines a loss spiral model (i.e., reciprocal relationships) between work-family conflict and depression, moderated by co-worker support. We expected that the moderation effect due to co-worker support would be evident among those working in isolation (i.e., mining workers) due to a greater level of intragroup attraction and saliency attributable to the proximity effects. We used a two wave panel study and data from a random population sample of Australian employees ( $n = 2793$ , [ $n = 112$  mining,  $n = 2681$  non-mining]). Using structural equation modelling we tested the reciprocal three way interaction effects. In line with our theory, co-worker support buffered the reciprocal relationship between WFC and depression, showing a protective effect in both pathways. These moderation effects were found in the mining industry only suggesting a proximity component moderates the social support buffer hypothesis (i.e., a three way interaction effect). The present paper integrates previous theoretical perspectives of stress and support, and provides insight into the changing dynamics of workplace relationships.

### **Anthropology in agricultural health and safety research and intervention**

Agriculture remains a dangerous industry, even as agricultural science and technology continue to advance. Research that goes beyond technological changes to address safety culture and policy are needed to improve health and safety in agriculture. In this commentary, I consider the potential for anthropology to contribute to agricultural health and safety research by addressing three aims: (1) I briefly consider what the articles in this issue of the Journal of Agromedicine say about anthropologists in agricultural health and safety; (2) I discuss what anthropologists can add to agricultural health and safety research; and (3) I examine ways in which anthropologists can participate in agricultural health and safety research. In using their traditions of rigorous field research to understand how those working in agriculture perceive and interpret factors affecting occupational health and safety (their “emic” perspective), and translating this perspective to improve the understanding of occupational health professionals and policy makers (an “etic” perspective), anthropologists can expose myths that limit improvements in agricultural health and safety. Addressing significant questions, working with the most vulnerable agricultural communities, and being outside establishment agriculture provide anthropologists with the opportunity to improve health and safety policy and regulation in agriculture.